

PUBLIC OPINION POLL: MANY DISSATISFIED WITH CONGRESS

Dissatisfaction with the job done by Congress reached a record high for recent years among the American people in 1970, according to a Harris Survey released March 1.

Almost two-thirds of the individuals in a nationwide sample judged the record of the second session of the 91st Congress as "only fair" or "poor." Only about one-fourth viewed the job done as "excellent" or "pretty good"—the lowest rating since the question was first asked by the survey in 1963.

President Nixon's handling of Congress in 1970 was also assigned low marks. Fifty-nine percent of the individuals interviewed rated his performance "only fair" or "poor."

These were the results of interviews in a cross section of 1,627 households conducted by the Harris organization during the period Jan. 9 to 15.

"How would you rate the job Congress did in 1970—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?" (Results are shown as "positive," a grouping of the first two choices, "negative," a grouping of the last two choices, and "not sure.")

| Year Survey Taken | Positive | Negative | Not Sure |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1971 | 26 | 63 | 11 |
| 1970 | 34 | 54 | 12 |
| 1969 | 34 | 54 | 12 |
| 1968 | 46 | 46 | 8 |
| 1967 | 38 | 55 | 7 |
| 1966 | 49 | 42 | 9 |
| 1965 | 64 | 26 | 10 |

"How would you rate President Nixon on his handling of Congress in 1970—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?"

| Positive | Negative | Not Sure |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 28 | 59 | 13 |

Ratings on Issues. When those interviewed were asked to evaluate Congress on specific issues, ratings were most often positive for requiring development of pollution-free car engines and banning cigarette advertising on television. Congress received its most negative marks for not raising Social Security benefits and not passing President Nixon's welfare program.

"How would you rate the job Congress has done in the past year on the following—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?"

| | Positive | Negative | Not Sure |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| Requiring pollution-free car engine | 76% | 15% | 9% |
| Banning cigarette advertising on TV | 64 | 26 | 10 |
| Extending federal aid to education | 59 | 26 | 15 |
| Giving vote to 18-year-olds | 55 | 36 | 9 |
| Rejecting SST subsidy | 38 | 28 | 34 |
| Passing expanded ABM | 37 | 34 | 29 |
| Passing anti-crime bill | 36 | 39 | 25 |
| Turning down Haynsworth and Carswell | 26 | 35 | 39 |
| Overriding Nixon veto on hospital bill | 26 | 35 | 39 |
| Not passing Nixon welfare reform bill | 25 | 48 | 27 |
| Not increasing Social Security | 13 | 71 | 16 |
| Not passing revenue-sharing bill | 10 | 46 | 44 |

Despite dissatisfaction with the record of a Republican President and Democratic-controlled Congress in 1970, 49 percent of the sample considered "having a Congress of a different party from the President as a check on him" is a "good idea." Thirty-six percent said this was a "bad idea" while 15 percent were unsure.

NORTH VIETNAM BILLS

Senators Walter F. Mondale (D Minn.) and William Saxbe (R Ohio) Feb. 25 introduced a bill (S 974) to prohibit any involvement of U.S. armed forces in an invasion of North Vietnam without prior and explicit authorization by the Congress. The bill, which would amend the Foreign Assistance Act, was cosponsored by 19 other Senators.

Identical bills (HR 4966, 5228, 5229, 5357) were introduced in the House by Rep. Michael J. Harrington (D Mass.) with 40 cosponsors. Harrington stated that passage of the legislation would prevent U.S. air or logistical support for an invasion of North Vietnam by any other country.

Mondale told the Senate that "the President has recently told us he does not intend to order a U.S. ground invasion of North Vietnam. But the President has changed his policy before. With events pressing in Laos, he may feel he will have to do so again."

Mondale said Congress cannot wait the weeks or months it could take to vote on the Vietnam Disengagement Act: "There is no question that we must pass that amendment to end the war. We must bring our men home by Christmas."

"If this bill is passed, the Congress will have added its authority to the President's express disavowal of a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam."

Senators cosponsoring the Mondale-Saxbe amendment were: Birch Bayh (D Ind.), Alan Cranston (D Calif.), Thomas F. Eagleton (D Mo.), Mike Gravel (D Alaska), Fred R. Harris (D Okla.), Philip A. Hart (D Mich.), Vance Hartke (D Ind.), Harold E. Hughes (D Iowa), Hubert H. Humphrey (D Minn.), George McGovern (D S.D.), Frank E. Moss (D Utah), Edmund S. Muskie (D Maine), Gaylord Nelson (D Wis.), William Proxmire (D Wis.), Adlai E. Stevenson III (D Ill.), John V. Tunney (D Calif.), Harrison A. Williams Jr. (D N.J.), Mark O. Hatfield (R Ore.) and Thomas J. McIntyre (D N.H.).

Nixon Statement. President Nixon said March 4 in a news conference that the government had no plans under consideration for a U.S.-assisted invasion of North Vietnam, but he did not rule out the possibility of a South Vietnamese invasion of the North.

Related Developments. Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton (D Mo.) March 1 introduced a resolution (S J Res 39) defining the war-making powers of the executive and congressional branches of the government. Eagleton said the resolution states that no treaty or executive agreement can bind the United States to future hostilities without further congressional approval. Eagleton's resolution and related bills introduced by Jacob Javits (R N.Y.) (S 731) and Robert Taft Jr. (R Ohio) (S J Res 18) will be included in Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on the President's war powers scheduled to begin March 8.